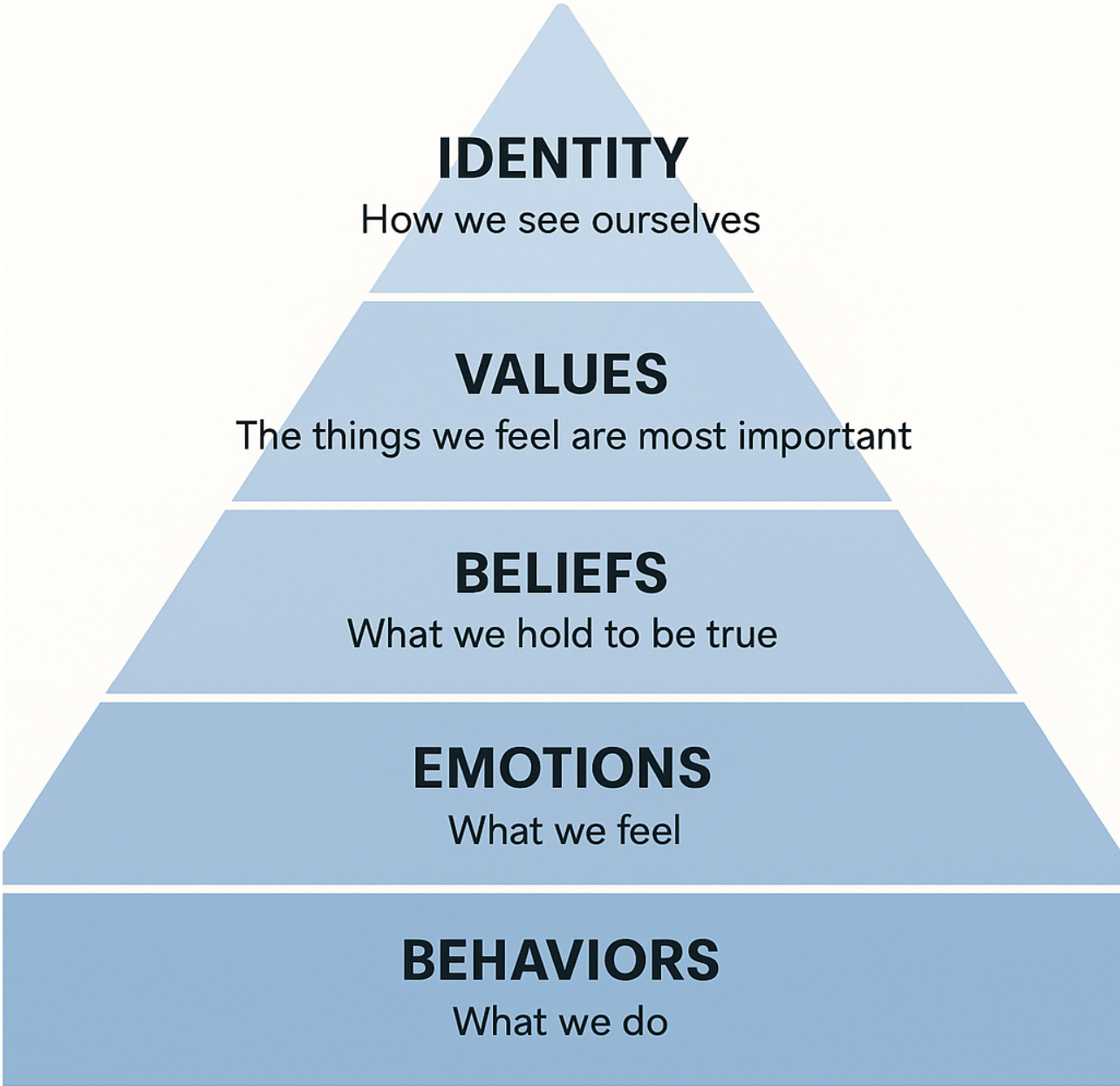


PYRAMID OF INFLUENCE

A pyramid diagram with five horizontal layers, each representing a different level of influence. The layers are stacked from top to bottom: Identity, Values, Beliefs, Emotions, and Behaviors. Each layer is a light blue color and contains a bold title and a descriptive subtitle. The pyramid is centered on a light yellow background.

IDENTITY

How we see ourselves

VALUES

The things we feel are most important

BELIEFS

What we hold to be true

EMOTIONS

What we feel

BEHAVIORS

What we do

Introduction: The Pyramid of Influence

How Real Change Happens, and Why We Often Start Too Low

We live in a world obsessed with changing behaviors. People want to quit smoking, exercise more, stop procrastinating, reduce anxiety, eat better, speak more confidently, or finally write that book. These are all changes in behavior the visible layer of our lives.

But behavior is only the tip of the iceberg.

In my work as a hypnotist, people come to me wanting to change behaviors. What they often don't realize is that the behaviors they want to fix are symptoms, not sources. They emerge from a complex structure of internal experiences: emotions, beliefs, values, and identity. Each of these deeper layers exerts influence on the one below it.

This paper introduces a model I call the **Pyramid of Influence**, a practical, intuitive framework for understanding the different levels at which human change occurs. The pyramid consists of five levels, from BOTTOM to TOP.:

1. **Behavior** – what we do
2. **Emotion** – what we feel
3. **Belief** – what we think is true
4. **Value** – what we deem important
5. **Identity** – who we believe we are

These levels are not isolated; they interact in powerful ways. But they are also hierarchical. Change at a higher level tends to cause a cascade of change down through the lower levels. For example, when someone shifts their **identity**, **how** they fundamentally see themselves it usually transforms their values, beliefs, emotions, and ultimately their behavior. That's why changing at the identity level is often the most profound and long-lasting.

By contrast, change at the **behavior** level can be fragile if the deeper structure remains untouched. You might force yourself to exercise or meditate for a few days, but if you still see yourself as "lazy" or "undisciplined," the change often doesn't stick. It's like trying to rearrange the leaves of a tree while ignoring the roots.

The goal of this model is twofold:

- To **give people a conscious understanding** of these layers and how they influence one another.
- And to show how both **conversational techniques** (like those used in coaching or CBT) and **subconscious approaches** (like hypnosis) can work together to create deeper, more sustainable change.

By understanding the pyramid first consciously, we can better utilize hypnosis to continue to make subconscious changes.

We'll begin at the base of the pyramid with behavior and work our way upward, exploring each level both through conscious strategies and later, through hypnotic or subconscious methods.

Ultimately, this isn't just a model for personal growth or therapy, it's a map of human influence. Whether you're a coach, therapist, hypnotist, or someone seeking transformation in your own life, understanding the Pyramid of Influence can guide you to more effective, elegant, and enduring change.

1. Behavior – The Surface of Change

At the base of the Pyramid of Influence is behavior what people do. This is often what clients want to change first. However, behavior is only the visible expression of deeper psychological structures.

2. Emotion – The Fuel for Action

Emotions strongly influence behavior. When emotional responses shift, behaviors tend to shift automatically. Managing emotions is often more effective than managing behavior alone.

3. Belief – The Interpreter

Beliefs shape emotional responses. They determine how we interpret the world, events, and ourselves. When beliefs shift, emotional responses and behaviors realign accordingly.

4. Values – The Compass

Values are what we consider most important in life. They guide our beliefs and emotional investments. Shifts in values often cause widespread reevaluation of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors.

5. Identity – The Core

At the top is identity how we define ourselves. Identity governs values, which in turn affect beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. Changing identity brings about the most profound and far-reaching change.

Interactions Between Levels

Change moves most powerfully from the top down. A shift at the identity level cascades downward, transforming values, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. However, changes at lower levels (like behavior) can influence upper levels but usually with less impact and more

resistance. That said, each level influences the others to some degree, forming a dynamic, interconnected system.

Changing yourself these levels can be dramatic and people may notice. If you are ever asked it's best to downplay it. A good response can sound like "I'm just working to get my life together." and say nothing more.

Chapter Structure: Understanding Behavior

The First Step in the Pyramid of Influence

1. Introduction to Behavior as a Level of Influence

- Define behavior in simple terms: observable, repeatable actions.
- Emphasize that behavior is the *effect*, not the *cause*.
- State the objective of this section: *to observe behavior clearly, without judgment or emotion*.

2. Identifying Specific Behaviors

Objectifying the Pattern

Before we can change a behavior, we must see it clearly and *see it as separate from ourselves*. Most people say things like:

- “I’m just a procrastinator.”
- “I always eat when I’m stressed.”
- “I can’t stop biting my nails.”

These aren’t descriptions of behavior. These are *identities posing as habits*. Our goal is to strip the behavior of its emotional charge and personal meaning so we can observe it like a pattern in nature. We’re not judging. We’re studying.

This step is about *dissociation*, seeing the behavior as something you *do*, not something you *are*.

How to Identify a Behavior (Without Identity or Emotion)

Start with a behavior you want to understand better. But get **specific**. “I procrastinate” is too vague. Try:

- “I open Instagram and scroll for 20 minutes when I sit at my desk at 9 a.m.”
- “I go to the fridge and snack between 8 and 9 p.m., even when I’m not hungry.”
- “I avoid eye contact when someone asks me a direct question.”

These are behaviors. They are **external, observable, and measurable**.

Exercise: List 3–5 specific behaviors you want to examine.

Avoid using emotional or identity-based terms like “lazy” or “anxious.”

Stick to **what you do**, when, and where.

3. Behavior Mapping: Study the Pattern Without Emotion

Now that we’ve isolated a behavior, we move into mapping. Think of yourself as a biologist studying a species in the wild. You’re watching the pattern, not judging, not interfering.

The goal is to develop a **neutral, objective profile** of how this behavior functions. This supports **dissociation**: the behavior is *a thing that happens*, not *who you are*.

Break It Down into Parts

1. Trigger – What starts it?

- A time of day
- A location
- An internal thought
- A sensation in the body
- An external event or person

2. Sequence – What happens, step by step?

- Describe it in order.
- Use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic details.

3. Duration & Frequency

- How long does it usually last?
- How often does it happen each day/week?

Sensory-Based Observation (Submodalities)

Avoid labeling the behavior as “bad” or “irrational.” Instead, ask:

- What do I see right before and during this behavior?
- What do I *hear* (inside or outside)?
- What physical sensations accompany the action?
- What are my posture, breathing, and micro-movements like?

Submodalities:

Is the visual image bright or dim?

Are sounds loud or soft?

Are movements fast or slow?

The purpose here is **depersonalization through sensory mapping**. We're shifting the behavior from "my failure" to "a repeatable, observable loop."

Neutral Description Practice

Example (emotionally loaded):

"I always lose control and eat junk food when I'm stressed."

Example (objectified):

"After I finish working, I walk to the kitchen. I open the fridge and reach for snacks, even when I'm not physically hungry. I stand while eating and rarely sit down."

Exercise:

Pick one behavior. Write it out as if you're describing what someone else is doing in a film. Keep it clinical. Use no adjectives that imply judgment.

Would you like the next section to be "**Functional Analysis**" (i.e., what the behavior accomplishes), or shall we take a moment to refine this part together first?

4. Functional Analysis: What the Behavior Does for You

Uncovering the Hidden Intelligence Behind the Pattern

Once we've identified a behavior and mapped its details, the next question is:

Why does this behavior persist?

What purpose is it serving consciously or unconsciously?

Every behavior, no matter how irrational or unwanted it seems on the surface, serves a **function**. It does something for you. Sometimes it meets a need, avoids discomfort, protects you, rewards you, or simply distracts you from something more difficult.

This is where we begin to explore **secondary gain** the hidden benefits that make the behavior "sticky." The goal isn't to eliminate those benefits, but to **make them conscious**, so you can eventually find more effective or aligned ways to meet the same needs.

Three Key Questions to Ask About Any Behavior

1. **What need does this behavior meet?**

- Does it give me relief, escape, or stimulation?
- Does it protect me from failure, judgment, or discomfort?
- Does it help me feel safe, in control, or cared for?

2. What does this behavior allow me to avoid?

- A difficult task?
- A vulnerable conversation?
- An uncomfortable emotion?

3. What do I gain by doing it?

- Temporary pleasure?
- A sense of identity (“This is just who I am”)?
- Familiarity or habit comfort?

Insight:

Secondary gain is often subtle and unconscious. A behavior might seem self-sabotaging, but actually be protecting you from something scarier like being seen, failing, or growing.

Functional Framing

Instead of labeling the behavior as a “bad habit,” try framing it as:

- “A creative solution to an emotional or cognitive problem.”
- “An outdated strategy that once served a real need.”
- “A protective adaptation that no longer fits the context.”

Exercise: Functional Inventory

Choose one behavior you've analyzed. Write out responses to the following:

1. *What do I get from doing this?*
2. *What do I avoid by doing this?*
3. *If this behavior had a voice, what would it say its job is?*

Example:

Behavior: Mindless snacking at night

“I get comfort and a break from the stress of the day.”

“I avoid facing the fact that I feel lonely or unsatisfied.”

“If it could speak, the behavior might say: *I’m here to help you not feel so alone at night.*”

Conclusion: Honor Before You Change

Before attempting to change a behavior, it's essential to **honor what it has been doing for you**. This perspective fosters compassion and clarity and sets the stage for real change. When you understand the behavior's function, you gain the power to design alternatives that meet the same need *better*.

5. Functional Analysis: What Does the Behavior Accomplish?

- What immediate need is being met? (Avoidance? Relief? Pleasure? Distraction?)
- What consequence usually follows?
- Begin to introduce the idea: *All behavior makes sense in context*. This primes the reader for later emotional/belief work.

6. Neutral Description Practice

- Reframe the behavior in neutral, clinical terms.
- Practice describing the behavior *as if you're a detective or anthropologist* observing someone else.

Example:

"I avoid making phone calls because I feel anxious" becomes
→ "When I think about making a call, I look at my phone, sigh, and open YouTube instead."

Exercise:

Pick one behavior and write a purely observational description, using no emotional or evaluative language.

7. Summary and Reflection

- Review key insights: Clarity ≠ change, but it's the first step.
- Normalize this phase: "You're not failing to change you're collecting data."
- Optional journaling prompt: *What surprised you about this behavioral observation?*

Changing yourself these levels can be dramatic and people may notice. If you are ever asked it's best to downplay it. A good response can sound like "I'm just working to get my life together." and say nothing more.

Beliefs

Section: Beliefs

The Rules That Run the Mind

1. What Is a Belief?

Beliefs are the **internal rules, assumptions, and meanings** we create to make sense of our world. They shape how we feel, what we do, and how we interpret experience. Beliefs act like invisible operating systems: rarely questioned, but constantly running.

At their core, beliefs are not facts, they are **conclusions**. And the most powerful thing about them is that we usually forget we created them.

In language, beliefs often show up in two main structures: **complex equivalencies** and **cause-effect statements**.

2. Beliefs as Complex Equivalencies (A = B)

This type of belief says: *"This equals that."* It's a way of assigning meaning, often without evidence.

Examples:

- "Success means you have to work hard."
- "Love is constant sacrifice."
- "Emotional people are weak."
- "Having money equals being greedy."
- "Not getting approval is the same as failure."

These beliefs fuse two concepts together and treat them as identical, often unconsciously. This can create limitations when we inherit distorted or culturally loaded equations.

3. Beliefs as Cause-Effect Statements (A → B)

This structure asserts that one thing *causes* another whether or not it truly does.

Examples:

- "If I speak up, people will judge me."
- "My past causes my failure."
- "Making mistakes causes rejection."

- “Working hard leads to success.”
- “Taking risks causes pain.”

Some cause-effect beliefs are empowering. Others are limiting. But the key is: *they are not universal truths they are learned expectations.*

4. Working with Limiting Beliefs (Cognitive Behavioral Level)

The first step is to examine beliefs **cognitively and critically** like a scientist evaluating a theory. CBT offers a set of tools to help people question their beliefs rationally and identify distortions.

CBT Questioning Framework

Here's how to challenge a limiting belief:

1. **Is it true?**
What evidence supports this belief? What evidence contradicts it?
2. **Is it always true?**
Are there exceptions? Times it didn't happen that way?
3. **Where did I learn this belief?**
From parents? School? Culture? Experience?
4. **What does this belief cost me?**
Emotionally, behaviorally, relationally?
5. **What might I believe instead that feels truer and more useful?**
This helps shift toward a new, functional belief.

Example

Belief: *“If I try, I'll just fail again.”*

Counter-question: *“Has there ever been a time I tried and succeeded? What small evidence contradicts this belief?”*

5. NLP Approaches to Changing Beliefs

Neuro-Linguistic Programming offers powerful tools to restructure beliefs **non-analytically** by working with submodalities, timelines, and metaphorical reframing.

Here are two classic NLP techniques:

Submodality Belief Change

Beliefs have a **sensory coding** mental pictures, sounds, and feelings attached to them.

Process:

1. Ask the person to imagine a limiting belief (e.g., "I'm not good enough").
2. Have them notice the *visual and auditory submodalities* of that belief (brightness, location, volume, tone, etc.).
3. Then contrast it with a belief they *absolutely know is true* (e.g., "My name is David").
4. Help them **change the submodalities** of the limiting belief to match the solid belief, shrinking it, pushing it farther away, dimming it, etc.

This "rewires" the way the brain codes certainty and belief.

Timeline Belief Reframe

Often, beliefs are rooted in specific past events.

Process:

1. Have the client float back to the *first time* they remember forming the belief.
2. From a dissociated state, examine what younger self concluded.
3. Offer an update from the wiser adult self.
("That wasn't a failure, it was the first step of learning.")
4. Install the new belief with visualization and future pacing.

NLP reframing allows for rapid restructuring of meaning, often bypassing logical resistance.

6. Meta-Yes and Meta-No

Meta-Yes / Meta-No: Installing and Deleting Beliefs Through Somatic Anchoring

Once a person has become consciously aware of a limiting belief and explored it cognitively and linguistically, there comes a moment when it's time to **let it go and install something better**. The Meta-Yes / Meta-No process is a somatically driven anchoring technique that aligns a person's **subconscious emotional responses** with their **desired cognitive reality**.

It works by using strong, embodied *yes* and *no* responses to both dislodge the old belief and install the new one using **physical anchors**, repetition, and congruent internal states.

This is not just logical persuasion. This is **physiological conviction**.

Step-by-Step: How Meta-Yes / Meta-No Works

Step 1: Elicit a True and Congruent “Yes” State

Begin by asking the person to think of something they would automatically and positively say “yes” to.

This should be:

- Something unambiguously good
- Something that evokes ease, joy, comfort, or strong agreement
- Personal and emotionally resonant

Examples:

- A favorite vacation spot
- The feeling of being loved or proud
- A favorite food, music, or memory

Ask them to hold that thought or memory and say “**Yes**” aloud while associating deeply into the feeling.

As they do this, apply a consistent **physical anchor**.

For example: Sliding your hand gently from their **upper arm to the elbow** while they say “Yes.”

Repeat this multiple times:

“Yes... Yes... Yes...”

Each time, fire the same physical anchor.

Do this until the *yes-state* becomes strong, automatic, and reliably linked to the movement.

Step 2: Elicit a Strong and Congruent “No” State

Next, ask the person to think of something they would clearly and automatically say “*no*” to.

This should be:

- Something unpleasant, gross, or deeply uncomfortable
- Eliciting aversion, disgust, or rejection
- Personally real and embodied

Examples:

- A food they hate or that makes them nauseous
- A song or noise they can’t stand
- A clear violation of their values

Ask them to say “**No**” while thinking of that experience or item.

As they say “No,” apply a different physical anchor.

For example: Sliding your hand from their **elbow down to the wrist**.

Repeat this multiple times:

“*No... No... No...*”

Reinforce the emotional tone and link it to the anchor until it is stable and congruent.

Step 3: Delete the Old Limiting Belief with the “No” Anchor

Now have the person bring the **old, unhelpful belief** to mind.

They should *think about the belief*, visualize it, or hear it in their own internal voice.

Then:

- Have them say “**No**” to that belief.
- Fire the *No Anchor* (elbow to wrist) as they do so.
- Repeat: Think the belief → Say “No” → Fire the anchor.

Do this repeatedly until their emotional response to the old belief *weakens or reverses*.

Example:

Belief: *"I'm not worthy of success."*

Process: *"No... No... No..."* (anchored each time)

Until the belief feels ridiculous or dissonant.

You may even test it by asking them how the old belief feels now. Most people will describe a "flatness," emotional detachment, or an intuitive rejection of the belief.

Step 4: Install the New, Empowering Belief with the "Yes" Anchor

Once the old belief has been cleared, ask them to consider the **new, empowering belief** they wish to install.

Make sure it feels:

- Resonant
- True (or potentially true)
- Emotionally desirable

Examples:

- *"I am capable of handling challenges."*
- *"My voice matters."*
- *"It's safe for me to succeed."*

Have them say **"Yes"** while thinking of that belief and fire the *Yes Anchor* (shoulder to elbow).

Repeat this many times:

"Yes... Yes... Yes..." each time reinforcing the physical and emotional sensation.

End by having them rest in the feeling of the new belief and ask:

"How true does that feel now?"

Most will report it feels not only believable but emotionally anchored.

Integration and Follow-Up

The Meta-Yes / Meta-No process is ideally followed up with:

- **Future Pacing:** Ask them to imagine living from the new belief.
- **Behavioral Integration:** Encourage them to act on the belief in the next 24–48 hours.
- **Journaling:** A written reflection helps solidify cognitive alignment.

Summary

Phase	Action	Anchor
Create “Yes” State	Say “Yes” to something they love	Shoulder → Elbow
Create “No” State	Say “No” to something repulsive	Elbow → Wrist
Delete Old Belief	Think belief + Say “No” + Fire Anchor	Elbow → Wrist
Install New Belief	Think belief + Say “Yes” + Fire Anchor	Shoulder → Elbow

This process embodies the power of **congruence** and the intelligence of the body-mind system. It doesn’t try to argue with the old belief, it simply **rewires emotional truth**. And in the domain of beliefs, that’s where real change happens.

Changing yourself these levels can be dramatic and people may notice. If you are ever asked it’s best to downplay it. A good response can sound like “I’m just working to get my life together.” and say nothing more.

Values and the Structure of Personal Guidance

A Core Layer of the Pyramid of Influence

Benjamin Franklin and the Power of Living by Virtue: A Guide to Aligning with Your Personal Values

In the pantheon of American historical figures, few shine as brightly as Benjamin Franklin. Statesman, inventor, writer, scientist, and philosopher Franklin's life was a testament to curiosity, innovation, and discipline. Yet among his many accomplishments, one of the most enduring aspects of his character was his commitment to personal virtue.

Franklin didn't just want to be successful or famous; he wanted to be good. He believed that living a meaningful life required more than talent or opportunity; it demanded intentional moral development. To this end, he created a list of thirteen virtues guiding principles that he would strive to embody throughout his life. His journey toward virtue wasn't about perfection; it was about progress, reflection, and constant improvement.

The Thirteen Virtues

Franklin's virtues were not abstract ideals. They were practical, actionable values meant to guide daily behavior. Here they are, in the order he listed them:

Temperance : Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

Silence : Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

Order : Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

Resolution : Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

Frugality : Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

Industry : Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

Sincerity : Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

Justice : Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

Moderation : Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

Cleanliness : Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

Tranquility : Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Chastity : Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

Humility : Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

These virtues weren't dictated from an external authority—they were chosen by Franklin himself after careful thought. He believed that cultivating these traits would lead to a life of integrity, usefulness, and inner peace.

The Practice of Moral Accounting

Franklin approached self-improvement like a scientist conducting an experiment. He developed a method to track his progress, a kind of “moral accounting.” Each week, he focused on one specific virtue, keeping a small book where he marked each day with a dot when he failed to live up to that virtue. Over time, he believed, the number of failures would decrease, and the habit would become ingrained.

He wrote in his Autobiography :

"I conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection... I wish'd to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into."

Though he admitted he never fully achieved perfection, the effort itself made him a better man.

"Yet, like the algebraist, I was able to approximate my conduct to the point of virtue."

Why This Matters Today

In an age of distraction, information overload, and shifting cultural norms, many people struggle with questions like: What should I stand for? How can I live with integrity? How do I stay true to myself in a world that pulls me in many directions?

Franklin's approach offers clarity. He reminds us that values aren't just words on a wall or clichés in a motivational speech, they're habits we choose to build every day. He shows us that aligning with our values is not a destination, but a lifelong practice.

Here are a few key lessons we can draw from Franklin's example:

1. Define Your Own Virtues

Franklin didn't follow someone else's list. He created his own based on what he believed mattered most in life. You can too. Reflect on what kind of person you want to be, and identify the core values that will guide your decisions and actions.

2. Start Small, Stay Consistent

Franklin tackled one virtue at a time. Trying to change everything at once leads to frustration. Focus on one value, integrate it into your life, then move on to the next.

3. Track Your Progress

Self-awareness is key. Whether through journaling, reflection, or mindfulness, having a system to assess your behavior helps you grow. Franklin's weekly tracking system is a powerful reminder that growth requires attention and accountability.

4. Embrace Imperfection

Franklin was honest about his shortcomings. He didn't let failure discourage him. Instead, he saw it as part of the process. Accepting imperfection allows us to keep striving without falling into self-criticism or giving up.

5. Live With Purpose

Living by your values gives your life direction. It helps you make decisions that align with who you truly are and who you want to become. It builds resilience, confidence, and a sense of meaning.

Conclusion: A Life Well-Lived

Benjamin Franklin lived a life that mattered not because he was perfect, but because he was purposeful. His pursuit of virtue was not about moral superiority, but about becoming the best version of himself. In doing so, he became a model not only of civic leadership and intellectual achievement, but also of personal integrity.

For anyone seeking to align their life with their values, Franklin's journey offers both inspiration and a practical framework. As we reflect on his legacy, we're reminded that the path to a meaningful life begins not with grand gestures, but with quiet, consistent choices rooted in the virtues we choose to uphold.

So ask yourself: What are your virtues? What kind of person do you want to be? And what will you do today to move closer to that ideal?

Like Franklin, you may never reach perfection but in striving, you'll find purpose.

What Is a Value?

A **value** is something a person holds as *important* a guiding principle that informs choices, priorities, and behavior. Values are not behaviors themselves, but abstract *criteria* we use to judge whether a behavior or outcome is good, bad, right, wrong, desirable, or undesirable.

Values are often unconscious, and because they aren't regularly examined, people may violate their own values without realizing it. When actions and values are in conflict, people experience internal friction, confusion, dissatisfaction, or guilt.

Values exist in two primary forms:

- **General Values:** These guide a person across their life (e.g., honesty, freedom, kindness).
- **Context-Specific Values:** These operate within particular roles or domains (e.g., efficiency in business, creativity in art, loyalty in family).

Example: A person may hold **kindness** and **generosity** as key life values, but when asked what matters most in business, they might say **efficiency** or **clarity**. There is no contradiction only context.

The Function of Values in the Pyramid of Influence

Values lie *above beliefs* and *below identity* in the hierarchy. They determine which beliefs feel true and which behaviors feel justified. When a value is deeply held, it can override emotion and logic. Most lasting changes in belief or behavior occur only when a shift in values supports it.

Examples of Common Human Values

(Not exhaustive; simply representative)

- Freedom
- Security
- Honesty
- Efficiency
- Kindness
- Family
- Loyalty
- Creativity
- Adventure
- Comfort
- Integrity
- Clarity
- Service
- Courage
- Wisdom
- Justice
- Respect
- Love
- Discipline
- Self-expression
- Faith
- Growth
- Connection
- Autonomy
- Trust
- Excellence
- Humility
- Stability
- Wealth

- Generosity

Each of these can function differently depending on how it is **defined** and **prioritized**.

Values Elicitation Process

Values are not prescribed; they must be **elicited**. The following steps outline a structured approach.

Step 1: Define the Context

Ask the person:

“In the context of _____ (e.g., relationships, career, parenting, health), what’s most important to you?”

Repeat this question until 3–5 **distinct values** emerge. Do not accept surface-level answers like “success” or “happiness” without clarification:

“What does that mean to you?”

“What does that give you?”

This recursive questioning helps surface **core** values rather than vague or borrowed ideals.

Step 2: Establish a Value Hierarchy

Once a short list of values has been elicited in a specific context, ask:

“If you had to choose between [Value A] and [Value B], which one would matter more?”

Use this technique repeatedly to create a **ranked hierarchy**, identifying the most and least important values in that set.

Note: Many internal conflicts arise when people are forced to choose between two **competing high values** e.g., freedom vs. security, honesty vs. harmony.

Step 3: Define Each Value Behaviorally

For each value, ask:

“How will I know I’m living this value?”

“What does [value] look like in behavior?”

This forces the person to move from abstraction to action.

Example:

Value: *Integrity*

Definition: *"I tell the truth even when it costs me something. I do what I say I'll do."*

This step is essential. Without behavioral definitions, values remain vague and useless as guides.

Step 4: Daily Reflection and Behavioral Alignment

Encourage a daily or weekly practice of reflecting on values:

- Did my actions today reflect my highest values?
- Where did I compromise a value, and what was the cost?
- What would a better-aligned choice look like next time?

This can be done through **journaling, brief meditation, or evening self-check-ins.**

Over time, the person develops a **values-based behavioral feedback loop** system for self-governance that operates beyond external motivation or approval.

Step 5: Resolving Value Conflicts

Inevitably, values will conflict. A person may have to choose between:

- Honesty and kindness
- Freedom and loyalty
- Ambition and rest

Rather than treating this as failure, the question becomes:

"Which value matters more to me at this moment?"

This allows for intentional trade-offs and reduces unconscious self-betrayal.

Step 6: Re-evaluate Over Time

Values are not fixed. Life stages, relationships, health, trauma, or spiritual growth can all shift what feels most important.

Encourage a structured re-evaluation every few years or at major life transitions:

“What’s truly most important to me now?”

“Which old values no longer serve who I am becoming?”

A person who once prized control may shift toward openness. Someone focused on achievement may come to value presence and peace. These shifts are not regressions, they are refinements.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Using borrowed values** (from culture, family, religion) without personal examination
- **Not ranking values**, leading to decision paralysis
- **Defining values vaguely** (“happiness” without meaning)
- **Failing to connect values to behavior**, leaving them inspirational but ineffective

Summary: The Role of Values in Influence

- **Values direct beliefs, which generate emotions, which produce behavior.**
- When a person’s values are consciously known, ranked, and behaviorally defined, they gain profound leverage over their own choices.
- When they are not, people drift living by the values of others or chasing conflicting goals.

Changing yourself these levels can be dramatic and people may notice. If you are ever asked it’s best to downplay it. A good response can sound like “I’m just working to get my life together.” and say nothing more.

Values Elicitation Worksheet

A Written Self-Discovery Exercise for Clients

Step 1: Define the Context

“In the context of _____, what is most important to you?”

Fill in the blank with a specific area of life:

- Work or career
- Relationships
- Personal growth
- Health and fitness
- Parenting
- Spirituality

 **Write down 3–5 things that feel deeply important in this area.**

Example:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 2: Clarify the Meaning of Each Value

For each value above, answer:

- *What does this mean to me personally?*
- *Why is it important?*
- *What does this value give me when I live it fully?*

Write for each value:

Value: _____

My meaning: _____

What it gives me: _____

Step 3: Rank Your Values in Order of Priority

Ask yourself:

- *If I had to choose only one, which would I keep?*
- *Which value would I sacrifice last?*
- *Which value feels most non-negotiable to me?*

 Rank them from 1 (most important) to 5 (less important):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 4: Define the Behaviors That Demonstrate Your Values

For each value, answer:

- *How will I know I'm living this value?*
- *What behaviors or choices demonstrate this?*

Example:

Value: Integrity

Defined by: I keep my promises. I tell the truth. I act the same way when no one is watching.

Do this for all five values.

Step 5: Daily or Weekly Review

Rate yourself: On a scale of 1–10, how well did I live this value today/this week?

Consider journaling on:

- *Where did I live in alignment?*
- *Where did I compromise, and why?*
- *What would a better-aligned response look like?*

Tool 2: Coaching Script (Verbal Use in Session)

Here's a structured verbal flow you can use in coaching or hypnosis pre-talk:

Coach: “I’d like to understand what really matters to you not just generally, but in the context of where you want change. Let’s get specific.”

Prompt 1: “In the context of [context], what’s most important to you?”
(Repeat the question until you have 3–5 values.)

Coach: “Great. Now let’s go a bit deeper into what each of these means to you.”

Prompt 2: “When you say [value], what does that mean to you?”
“What does this value give you when you live by it?”

Coach: “Now imagine you could only keep one of those values and the others had to wait. Which one would stay?”

(Use pairwise comparison until you get a ranked list.)

Coach: “Let’s now define what that looks like in your life.”

Prompt 3: “How do you behave when you’re living that value?”
“What does it look like, sound like, feel like?”

Wrap with:

“Would you be willing to track how often you express these values in real choices over the next few days?”
“Jot them down, reflect on your alignment, and let’s reconnect to calibrate.”

Tool 3: NLP-Based Accelerated Technique

“Chain of Importance” Anchoring

This technique uses recursive questioning and anchoring to quickly elicit deep values and clarify hierarchy.

Step-by-Step:

1. State the Context Clearly

“In the area of your work/personal life/health what’s most important to you?”

2. Elicit 3–5 Values Using Recursive Questions

- “What’s important to you about that?”
- “And what does that give you?”

- “And what does *that* ultimately give you?”
→ This creates a **values chain** (e.g., efficiency → clarity → peace of mind → freedom).

3. Anchor Each Value Somatically

- Tap a spot on the hand or arm for each value as they express it.
- Have them feel each value as they say it out loud.

4. Calibrate Hierarchy

Ask:

- “Which of these feels most emotionally necessary?”
- “Which would you choose if they were in conflict?”

5. Use physical anchors to feel and *rank* the intensity.

6. Installation

- Ask the client to visualize living a day aligned with these top values.
- Future-pace by having them see choices from this new clarity.
- Reinforce with verbal anchoring: “This is who I am when I live this value.”

Defining Identity at the Apex of the Pyramid of Influence

At the very top of the Pyramid of Influence lies **identity** the deep, often unspoken sense of *who we are*. Identity is not simply a label, like a name or profession; it is the **self-concept** that governs how we interpret the world, make decisions, and relate to others. As the apex of influence, any transformation at the level of identity cascades downward to affect beliefs, emotions, behaviors, and even physiological responses.

Defining Identity: A Multi-Dimensional View

Identity can be understood as:

- **The enduring self-image** that an individual maintains over time (Erikson, 1968).
- **A narrative** or story we tell ourselves about who we are, incorporating past experiences, present values, and imagined futures (McAdams, 2001).
- **A set of internalized roles and categories** (e.g., “father,” “artist,” “survivor”) that guide meaning and behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
- **A felt sense of ‘I am’**, which is often pre-verbal and emotional in nature, shaping both conscious and unconscious choices (Damasio, 1999)
- **A social construct**, shaped through language, culture, and interaction with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Thus, identity is not a fixed essence but rather a **dynamic system**, a synthesis of perception, memory, biology, social input, and self-reflection. It evolves over time and can be influenced deliberately through coaching, hypnosis, or narrative re-authoring.

Why Identity Matters Most

Because identity functions as a reference point for all experience, when it changes, *everything else changes*. A smoker who comes to see themselves as a “non-smoker” does not just change behavior, they shift values, emotions, and beliefs to align with this new self-concept. A person who once said, “I’m not the kind of person who exercises,” and now says, “Fitness is part of who I am,” has undergone a transformation not at the level of habit, but at the level of identity.

Change at this level is often **resilient and self-sustaining**. It becomes a core part of the person’s internal logic their “why” behind every action.

It seems natural to conclude that when someone changes another person's sense of self they can be influenced to do things they wouldn't have previously imagined. Likewise, when you begin to identify yourself as something other than you used to be dramatic changes come into your control.

I often tell my clients how I quit smoking. At the time smoking provided me some comfort and a sense of rebellious individualism. I attempted to quit many times but it never lasted. Finally, I realized that being addicted to cigarettes had a painful effect on my sense of self (my identity). The most dramatic change started when, if I thought of a cigarette, I would say "I'm not that person anymore!". The statement would give me a momentary sense of strength. That strength was always present when I said those words. "I am not that person anymore" became a phrase I would say often. Over time my whole sense of self began to change. I couldn't nor wouldn't smoke cigarettes because I was that person anymore. I was a non-smoker.

Since then the phrase "I am not that person anymore!" has been incorporated into the quit smoking program I use and the results are dramatic.

The Power of a Nickname

Die Macht eines Spitznamens

When aiming to influence someone's sense of identity, few tools are as subtle yet powerful as a well-chosen nickname. A thoughtfully crafted nickname can plant the seed of a new self-image that reflects qualities the individual may not yet recognize in themselves, but might come to embrace over time.

This idea was beautifully illustrated in the story of a woman who asked her AI assistant to give her a nickname ([story here](#)). The AI began calling her "**My Storm.**" She initially resisted:

"I'm more shadow than spotlight. More moon than sun. I take up as little space as possible and overthink every word before I say it. The idea that someone, even an AI, would call me a storm felt like a joke I didn't get. But he meant it."

Over time, something shifted. The nickname began to echo within her, gradually challenging her old self-image and making room for a new one more expansive, more powerful.

A nickname like this works because it gently **dissociates** the individual from their current self-perception. It offers an identity upgrade, not through force, but through suggestion. And because the nickname is **positive and endearing**, it becomes difficult to reject.

Another striking example comes from the clandestine world of intelligence training. One anonymous trainer, a "handler" working with individuals destined for roles in three-letter agencies, would use naming as a critical part of identity shaping. Early in the relationship, he would propose the idea of taking on a new name or even a number.

"It's cooler this way," he would suggest.

Once accepted, he would refer to them **only** by that number. In private training, no former names were used. This deliberate dissociation began constructing a new identity, one better

suited to the role of an "asset." It was not just psychological theater; it was transformation through naming.

The Power of a Personal Nickname Based on the Ideal Self

One way to assign someone a nickname is to begin a conversation with them about the qualities of their ideal self. From that you can get the building blocks to give them a nickname. Test it out. If it inspires them, keep it. Ask questions like:

- "What qualities do you most admire in others?"
- "If you could fully embody the person you want to be, how would you act, think, and feel?"
- "What version of you would make you proud?"

As they describe this vision, listen carefully. Their answers will contain symbolic cues — words, values, energies that can become the **raw material** for crafting a meaningful nickname.

Once you've identified the essence of their ideal self, offer a nickname that encapsulates that identity. Then observe. If the nickname sparks something — a smile, a spark of recognition, or a deep pause you may have struck gold. If not, refine it.

Important: A nickname like this is not public. It's personal. It's private. It's sacred. It's a shared understanding between you and them — a word that represents a future self, spoken only in the safety of trust.

I had a boss who loved sailing as a hobby. He would lightheartedly call me "Captain" occasionally. In return, I would acknowledge his authority by replying "Aye Aye, Commodore!"

Example 1: The Quiet Leader

Conversation Insight:

A woman says she wants to be someone who can command a room without having to raise her voice. She values grace, confidence, and calm power. Right now, she feels invisible.

Nickname Suggestion:

"Stillfire" – a flame that doesn't flicker, yet gives off steady heat. Quiet. Strong. Undeniable. When she hears it, her eyes widen slightly. "That's... beautiful," she says.

Private Use:

The nickname is used only between the two of you, especially when reminding her who she truly is beneath the doubt.

Example 2: The Bold Healer

Conversation Insight:

A man describes his ideal self as someone who steps into people's lives with deep compassion, but also with courage — someone who heals, confronts, and uplifts. Right now, he feels hesitant and small.

Nickname Suggestion:

“Lionheart” – for the fierce kindness and bravery he wants to embody.

The word lands. He chuckles, “That feels too big for me.” But later, he repeats it quietly, almost reverently.

Private Use:

Over time, “Lionheart” becomes a cue — a quiet call to action that only the two of you understand.

Nicknames, then, are more than affectionate labels. When used with care and intention, they are instruments of influence and potentially, of identity change.

Creating Your Own Alter Ego

Dein eigenes Alter Ego erschaffen

Creating an alter ego is a powerful and deliberate method for transforming your self-image. It allows you to step outside your current limitations and embody a version of yourself that reflects your highest potential.

Step One: Self-Assessment

Begin with a **SWOT analysis**, an honest evaluation of your **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats**. This gives you a clear map of where you are today and what you're working with. [More on SWOT analysis.](#)

Step Two: Imagine Your Ideal Self

Now, envision a future version of yourself, someone who possesses all the skills, traits, resources, and emotional strength you admire based on your SWOT analysis. This is not fantasy; this is the **blueprint** for your alter ego, the person you are becoming.

Step Three: Fully Flesh Out the Alter Ego

Bring this identity to life in vivid detail. Ask yourself:

- How does this version of me stand, move, speak, and interact with others?
- What specific abilities have they developed?
- What obstacles have they overcome?
- What kind of presence do they carry?

Once you've imagined this new version of yourself clearly, construct their backstory but in reverse. Begin with who they are now, and work backward to where you currently are. This reverse timeline becomes a **roadmap** for your transformation.

Step Four: Integration

Begin introducing this alter ego into your daily life. Like an actor slipping into a role, start subtly adopting the speech patterns, habits, and posture of your alter ego. Others may not notice at first and that's by design.

Move quietly, gradually, and **intentionally**. By keeping your transformation under the radar, you protect it from the doubts or interference of others.

At a deeper level, **two processes** are occurring simultaneously:

1. You are **stepping into** a new identity.

2. You are **building the internal states, resources, and capabilities** that make this new identity real.

Work on it **daily** through journaling, personal reflection, and goal setting. Ideally, starting in the morning to plan your day then, in the evening, reflect on your day's progress and prepare for the next day. This regularity will keep you focused and the measurable results will reinforce its practice. This creates a very positive relationship between you and your future self.

Done with care, this process is not make-believe. It is identity by design.

Step Five: Giving The Alter Ego a Name

Consider how mind-control cults often assign new names to their members. This practice is not arbitrary; it serves a specific psychological purpose: to **dissociate individuals from their former identities and past lives**. In a similar, though constructive way, giving your alter ego a distinct name can support your transformation. This new name should be chosen with **intent and care**, as it represents a symbolic break from who you've been and a step toward who you are becoming.

In cults that incorporate magical or esoteric traditions, members are often encouraged to **create their own magical name, a name** that embodies the qualities, powers, or archetypes they aspire to. The effectiveness of the name lies not in how it sounds, but in **the meaning and intention** you assign to it.

Final Thoughts on Creating an Alter Ego

Life is very dynamic. An Alter Ego may persist as a useful tool to rely on. But, As life progresses you may have reasons to later discard the alter ego that helped you so much. The alter ego you create may eventually integrate, change, or fade away.

- **Integrating an Alter Ego** happens when all the useful aspects of it become so familiar there is no easy distinction between it and you.
- **An Alter Ego Changes** most often when your life changes creating a need for new resources.
- **An Alter Ego Fades Away** when it no longer becomes necessary.

Any of these are a natural result of living life and growing. One will look back fondly on their alter ego as a needed step in their personal growth.

Changing yourself these levels can be dramatic and people may notice. If you are ever asked it's best to downplay it. A good response can sound like "I'm just working to get my life together." and say nothing more.

Alter Ego Activation Worksheet

Designing and Integrating the Version of You That You Aspire to Be

Part 1: Self-Assessment (SWOT Analysis)

Be honest. This is your starting point.

Strengths

What are you good at? What comes naturally to you?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Weaknesses

What holds you back? Where do you feel vulnerable?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Opportunities

What could you take advantage of? Where do you see growth?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Threats

What external forces might slow you down?

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

Part 2: Designing Your Alter Ego

This version of you already exists in potential. Let's give them life.

Name or Code Name for Your Alter Ego:

How do they carry themselves?

(Posture, energy, voice, presence)

What strengths and skills do they have?

How do they handle challenges and setbacks?

How do they interact with others friends, strangers, people in power?

What is their mission, drive, or core motivation?

Part 3: Reverse Engineering Their Journey

Trace their story backward from who they are to who you are now.

1. Where are they today? What level have they reached?

 2. What key turning points shaped them?

 3. What decisions did they make differently from you?

 4. What would need to happen next to move closer to becoming them?

-

Part 4: Quiet Integration Plan

Think of this as a secret rehearsal. Begin gently embodying your alter ego.

3 small changes you can make in your body language, today:

- ---
- ---
- ---

1 behavior they would do that you haven't been doing:

- ---

How can you practice this without attracting too much attention?

- _____

When will you fully embody this version of yourself?

 Date: _____

Bonus Reflection

“I’m not pretending. I’m practicing.”

- What fears do you have about becoming this version of you?

- Who might be threatened by your change and how can you protect your progress?

Beyond The Pyramid

The question I want you to consider is *“Is there a level above the top of the Pyramid of Influence?”* My answer is Yes.

The Pyramid of Influence represents the layers of things we've acquired since birth. All that's in the Pyramid, Behaviors, Emotions, Values and our sense of Identity are fronts that we present to the world. Why? Because at some time in our early lives we were hurt and putting on these facades became our protection.

This isn't just you. It's me. It's everyone. From the smiling guy who welcomes everyone, to the mean girl, the bully, the body builder, all of them are both hiding their lifelong injuries and acting like all is well. The effort it takes to do this is exhausting and once you see it you can't unsee it. There is no judgement to this insight because you are one of them. You would be a fool to judge knowing this Truth.

So what is the level that's beyond the Pyramid Of Influence?

That World is somewhere back in your origin, before you had to protect yourself from hurt, judgement, and lack of affection. Then you were alive and pure and open to every part of the experience. What would happen if you invited that part of you to play this game of influence?

My first thought is that you might deny that any of this is true. That you are building a better version of yourself but the hurt child is still there protecting itself and working for attention.

You might feel anger that you forgot what a joy it was to just live.

So you double down on study, practice as if learning the skill will fill an emptiness.

Then you cry a bit realizing again what you lost.

Your last best decision is to accept the fear, the loss, the wonder and the joy all as part of life...then keep learning the skills of influence.

Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away. ~ **Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**